

April 14, 1995

MEMORANDUM

TO: Nursing Home Administrators

FROM: 
Alan Samuels, Director
Division of Health Licensing

SUBJECT: Conditions that will allow a provider-wide partial exception to the requirements of Regulation 61-17, Standards for Licensing Nursing Homes, Section G.(3)(a) (verbal orders for medication and treatment.)

R61-17, Section G.(3)(a), requires that, "All physicians' orders for medication and treatment shall be recorded in the resident's medical record, signed and dated by the individual receiving the orders. All orders (including verbal orders) shall be signed and dated by the prescribing physician or his designee within 48 hours."

Nursing homes have experienced difficulty in meeting R61-17, Section G.(3)(a), standards. We also recognize that applying this requirement categorically may interfere with other functions more directly related to quality resident care. In the interest of establishing reasonable standards which can be met by providers and yet do not compromise the health and welfare of residents cared for in South Carolina nursing homes we have determined that an alternative standard will be considered as acceptable.

All nursing homes will be required to meet either the standard outlined in R61-17, Section G.(3)(a) or, as an alternative:

1. A committee (to include representation by physicians treating residents at the facility, a pharmacist, and the Director of Nursing) shall identify and list categories of diagnostic or therapeutic verbal orders (associated with any potential hazard to the resident) that must be authenticated by the prescriber within a limited time frame. A copy of this list shall be maintained at each nurses' station.
2. Schedule II controlled substances must be included on the list of drugs which shall be authenticated within a limited time frame by the prescriber.

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3. Verbal orders designated by the committee (described in #1 above) as requiring authentication within a limited time frame shall be countersigned and dated by the prescriber or designee within a time frame defined in nursing home procedures, but in no case more than two (2) days after the order was given.

4. All other verbal orders must be countersigned and dated by the prescriber or his designee within 30 days.

5. All other R61-17 standards shall apply unless specifically excepted.

This standard in R61-17, G.(3)(a), will be enforced during inspections, as required either by the regulation or the provider-wide exception. This exception applies to any nursing home licensed by the Department. It relates solely to South Carolina licensing standards. Any adverse condition(s) that may be related to this exception may result in revocation of the exception by the Department.

If there are any questions, you may call (803) 737-7202

AS:DG

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